



PATRIOT ACT UPDATE

25 Days Until Expiration

JANUARY 9, 2006

Senate Extends USA PATRIOT Act Temporarily

Threats Loom Over Further Reauthorization

A minority of Senators in the U.S. Senate have effectively stalled the reauthorization of the USA Patriot Act, one of the key tools used to fight terrorism after the September 11th attacks on America. In 25 days, key provisions of this vital law will expire and leave America more vulnerable to the terrorists seeking to attack us.

In fact, just a few weeks ago, the Senate Democratic leader Senator Harry Reid boasted to a group of political supporters that Senate Democrats had “killed the Patriot Act.”

President George W. Bush has called on Senate Democrats to reauthorize this key anti-terrorism legislation, saying it was “inexcusable” to block renewal of the law in the face of terrorist threats.

“The terrorist threat is not going to expire,” Bush said. “The senators obstructing the Patriot Act need to understand that the expiration of this vital law will endanger America and will leave us in a weaker position in the fight against brutal killers,” he added.



President George W. Bush, flanked by Attorney General Gonzales and Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff, meets with U.S. Attorneys from across the country who have used the Patriot Act to help keep America safe from terrorist attacks for more than four years (Roosevelt Room, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2006). “This Patriot Act was passed overwhelmingly by the United States Congress in 2001,” said the President in his remarks to the press. “Members from both parties came together and said we will give those on the front line of protecting America the tools necessary to protect American citizens, and, at the same time, guard the civil liberties of our citizens.” White House photo by Eric Draper

PATRIOT ACT FACT:

In 2001, after the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. Senate voted 98-1 to pass the Patriot Act. Nearly all of the senators now threatening to continue to filibuster the Patriot Act actually voted for it in 2001.

What Happens if the Patriot Act Expires?

If the Patriot Act is allowed to expire, we will revert back to pre-9/11 law enforcement capabilities, making it more difficult to investigate a potential terrorist attack than it is to catch a drug dealer, a mobster, or a white collar criminal.

For example:

- Confusion will once again be injected into what and how information may be shared between criminal investigators and intelligence personnel.

- Investigators would possibly be several steps behind sophisticated terrorists who frequently change phones to evade surveillance.
- In the vast majority of cases, intelligence investigators will no longer be able to trace the calls of terrorists and spies.
- It will once again be illegal for a law enforcement officer who learns of an imminent terrorist threat through a wiretap to disclose that threat to our nation's intelligence agencies without first obtaining a court's approval.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Although there has not been a verified abuse of the Patriot Act since its enactment in 2001, the reauthorization bill includes more than 30 new significant civil liberties protections.
- In addition to reauthorizing the Patriot Act, the reauthorization bill also includes new provisions that would bolster port security, help guard against attacks on mass transportation like trains and buses, and continue the attack on the illegal money flow to terrorists around the world.

None of these beneficial provisions will become law unless the minority of Senators who are filibustering the Patriot Act stop their obstructionist tactics.

